



**County of Los Angeles
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES**

425 Shatto Place, Los Angeles, California 90020
(213) 351-5602

PHILIP L. BROWNING
Director

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Chief Deputy Director

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May 27, 2016

To: Supervisor Hilda L. Solis, Chair
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From: Philip L. Browning
Director

THE DANGERFIELD INSTITUTE OF URBAN PROBLEMS GROUP HOME QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Out-of-Home Care Management Division (OHCMD) conducted a Quality Assurance Review (QAR) of The Dangerfield Institute of Urban Problems Group Home (the Group Home) in September 2015. The Group Home is a Rate Classification Level 11 and has three sites located in the Second Supervisorial District. The Group Home provides services to the County of Los Angeles DCFS placed children and Probation youth. According to the Group Home's Program Statement, its stated purpose is to provide "stable, constant, nurturing and predictable environment, one that is responsive to the individual child's needs."

The QAR looked at the status of the placed children's safety, permanency and well-being during the most recent 30 days and the Group Home's practices and services over the most recent 90 days. The Group Home scored at or above the minimum acceptable score in all 9 focus areas: Safety, Permanency, Placement Stability, Visitation, Engagement, Service Needs, Assessment & Linkages, Teamwork and Tracking & Adjustment.

In March 2016, OHCMD Quality Assurance Reviewer met with the Group Home and discussed the results of the QAR. The Group Home did not require a Quality Improvement Plan, as the Group Home scored at or above the minimum acceptable score in all focus areas of the QAR.

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If you have any questions your staff may contact me or Aldo Marin, Board Relations Manager, at (213) 351-5530.

PLB:KR:KDR:rds

Attachments

c: Sachi A. Hamai, Chief Executive Officer
John Naimo, Auditor-Controller
Public Information Office
Audit Committee
Calvin C. Remington, Interim Probation Chief
Lorrie Irving, Administrator, The Dangerfield Institute of Urban Problems Group Home
Lajuannah Hills, Regional Manager, Community Care Licensing Division
Lenora Scott, Regional Manager, Community Care Licensing Division

**THE DANGERFIELD INSTITUTE OF URBAN PROBLEMS GROUP HOME
QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW
FISCAL YEAR 2015-2016**

SCOPE OF REVIEW

The Out-of-Home Care Management Division (OHCMD) conducted a Quality Assurance Review (QAR) of The Dangerfield Institute of Urban Problems Group Home (the Group Home) in September 2015. The purpose of the QAR is to assess the Group Home's service delivery and to ensure that the Group Home is providing children with quality care and services in a safe environment, which includes physical care, social and emotional support, education and workforce readiness and other services to protect and enhance their growth and development.

The QAR is an in-depth case review and interview process designed to assess how children and their families are benefiting from services received and how well the services are working. The QAR utilizes a six-point rating scale as a *yardstick* for measuring the situation observed in specific focus areas. The QAR assessed the following focus areas:

Status Indicators:

- Safety
- Permanency
- Placement Stability
- Visitation

Practice Indicators:

- Engagement
- Service Needs
- Assessment & Linkages
- Teamwork
- Tracking & Adjustment

For Status Indicators, the QAR focuses on the focus child's functioning during the most recent 30-day period and for Practice Indicators, the QAR focuses on the Group Home's service delivery during the most recent 90-day period.

For the purpose of this QAR, interviews were conducted with three focus children, three Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Children's Social Workers (CSWs), three Group Home staff members and three service providers.

At the time of the QAR, the Group Home served 24 DCFS placed children and no Probation youth. The focus children's average number of placements was six, their overall average length of placement was 14 months and their average age was 17. The focus children were randomly selected. None of the focus children were included as part of the sample for the Contract Administration Division's (CAD's) 2015-2016 Contract Compliance Review.

QAR SCORING

The Group Home received a score for each focus area based on information gathered from on-site visits, agency file reviews, DCFS court reports and updated case plans, and interviews with the Group Home staff, DCFS CSWs, service providers and the focus children. The minimum acceptable score is 6 in the area of Safety and 5 in all remaining areas.

Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	Group Home QAR Score	Group Home QAR Rating
Safety - The degree to which the Group Home staff ensures that the focus children are free of abuse, neglect and exploitation by others in his/her placement and other settings.	6	6 - Optimal Safety Status	The focus children have a highly safe living situation with fully reliable and competent caregivers and are protected well at all times. Protective strategies are fully operative and dependable.
Permanency - The degree to which the focus children are living with caregivers, who are likely to remain in this role until the focus children reach adulthood, or the focus children are in the process of returning home or transitioning to a permanent home and the focus children, the Group Home staff, caregivers, DCFS CSWs and if applicable, Department of Probation Officers (DPOs) support the plan.	5	6 - Optimal Status	The focus children have optimal permanency. The focus children have achieved legal permanency and/or live in a family setting which the focus children, Group Home staff and all team members have evidence will endure lifelong.
Placement Stability - The degree to which the Group Home staff ensures that the focus children's daily living, learning and work arrangements are stable and free from risk of disruptions. Known risks are being managed to achieve stability and reduce the probability of future disruptions.	5	5 - Good Stability	The focus children have substantial stability in placement and school settings with only planned changes and no more than one disruption in either setting over the past 30 days.

Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	Group Home QAR Score	Group Home QAR Rating
Visitation - The degree to which the Group Home staff support maintaining important connections with significant family members/Non-Related Extended Family Members (NREFMs) through appropriate visitation and other means.	5	6 - Optimal Maintenance of Visitation and Connections	Fully effective connections are being excellently maintained for all significant family members/NREFMs through appropriate visits and other connecting strategies. All appropriate family members/NREFMs have regular visits.
Engagement - The degree to which the Group Home staff working with the focus children and their family members/NREFMs and other team members for the purpose of building a genuine, trusting and collaborative working relationship with the ability to concentrate on the focus children's strengths and needs.	5	6 - Optimal Engagement Efforts	To an optimal degree, a rapport has been developed, such that the Group Home staff, DCFS CSWs, DPOs (if applicable) and the focus children feel heard and respected. Reports indicate that excellent efforts are being used.
Service Needs - The degree to which the Group Home staff involved with the focus children work toward ensuring the focus children's needs are met and identified services are being implemented and supported and are specifically tailored to meet the focus children's unique needs.	5	6 - Optimal Supports and Services	An excellent array of supports and services fully matches intervention strategies identified in the focus children's case plans. The services are substantially helping the focus children make progress toward planned outcomes.
Assessment & Linkages - The degree to which the Group Home staff involved with the focus children and their family members/NREFMs understand the focus children's strengths, needs, preferences and underlying needs and services provided are regularly assessed to ensure progress is being made toward case plan goals.	5	6 - Optimal Assessment and Understanding	The focus children's functioning and support systems are comprehensively understood. Knowledge necessary to understand the focus children's strengths, needs and preferences is continuously updated.

Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	Group Home QAR Score	Group Home QAR Rating
Teamwork - The degree to which the "right people" for the focus children and their family members/NREFMs, have formed a working team that meets, talks and makes plans together.	5	6 - Optimal Teamwork	The team contains all of the important supporters and decision-makers in the focus children's lives, including informal supports. The team has formed an excellent, consistent working system that meets, talks and plans together.
Tracking & Adjustment - The degree to which the Group Home staff involved with the focus children and their family members/NREFMs are carefully tracking the progress that the focus children are making, changing family circumstances, attainment of goals and planned outcomes.	5	5 - Good Tracking and Adjustment Process	Intervention strategies, supports and services being provided to the focus children are generally responsive to changing conditions. Frequent monitoring, tracking and communication of the focus children's status is occurring.

OHCMD conducted the last QAR of the Group Home in September 2014 and it was determined that a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) was not required. In March 2016, the Quality Assurance Reviewer met with the Group Home to discuss the results of the QAR. Based on the information below it appears that the Group Home continues to score at or above the minimum acceptable score in all nine focus areas, also demonstrating increased performance in six focus areas on their 2015-2016 QAR.

STATUS INDICATORS
(Measured over last 30 days)

Status Indicators	Safety	Permanency	Placement Stability	Visitation
2014-2015 Scores	6	5	5	5
2015-2016 Scores	6	6	5	6

In the area of Safety, OHCMD found that the Group Home continues to provide a highly safe living environment for the focus children. The Group Home conducts weekly walk-through safety assessments for all of their sites. The Group Home standard staff to child ratio is 1:3; however, the Group Home has updated their Program Statement to enhance the supervision of placed children by providing a 1:2 staff to child ratio. In addition, when the placed children request additional support, the Group Home provides one-on-one supervision to assist the

placed children in de-escalating situations. In addition, a therapist visit is arranged immediately for any placed child who is presenting safety issues for themselves or others.

In the area of Placement Stability, the Group Home continued to provide a good quality of services and stability with significant support for the focus children to adjust to their placement, decrease self-injurious behaviors, decrease AWOLing incidents, accommodate visitation plans and accomplish their goals. The DCFS CSWs and service providers reported that the Group Home staff does a good job of assisting the children to adjust to their placement and genuinely care about the focus children. The focus children reported having positive and enduring relationships with primary Group Home staff and service providers. The focus children did not experience disruptions at school or at their Group Home placement.

In the areas of Permanency and Visitation, OHCMD found that the Group Home has increased the quality of services to the placed children. We found that the Group Home assists the focus children in reaching their permanency goals by linking the focus children to appropriate services, facilitating family visits, maintaining fully effective connections with significant family members/NREFMs and including family members in team meetings when the permanency goal is Family Reunification (FR). One focus child is receiving FR services with her father. This focus child had monitored visitation with her father at the Group Home. The Group Home staff supported the liberalization of the father's visits by updating the DCFS CSW with the progress of the visitation and went above and beyond to ensure that visits occur. The Group Home was also supporting the other two focus children in reaching their permanency goals for Planned Permanent Living Arrangement by preparing them for self-sufficiency.

PRACTICE INDICATORS
(Measured over last 90 days)

Practice Indicators	Engagement	Service Needs	Assessment & Linkages	Teamwork	Tracking & Adjustment
2014-2015 Scores	5	5	5	5	5
2015-2016 Scores	6	6	6	6	5

In the areas of Engagement, Service Needs and Teamwork, OHCMD found that the Group Home had increased the quality of services to the focus children. The focus children, DCFS CSWs and service providers reported very positive remarks about the Group Home staff's communication skills, services being provided, availability, working partnerships and willingness to hear their feedback. One of the DCFS CSWs also reported that the father of one of the focus children expressed feeling supported by the Group Home staff.

In the area of Assessment & Linkages, the Group Home continues to do well in fully assessing and understanding the focus children's strengths, risks and underlying needs requiring interventions and services. The Group Home staff continues to assess the focus children's

status on a daily basis, linking the focus children to essential services that effectively improve their level of functioning and modifying interventions as needed. The DCFS CSWs reported that the focus children were linked to and provided with appropriate services. The DCFS CSWs and focus children reported that the supports and services matched intervention strategies to accomplish the case plan. The focus children were linked to individual therapy, group therapy, tutoring, independent living skills, mentorship services and psychiatric services, when appropriate.

The Group Home holds team meetings regularly and as frequently as the team members determine the need and always makes efforts to include appropriate family members/NREFMs and service providers, as well as the focus children. The DCFS CSWs, service providers and the focus children had positive feedback about the team meetings.

In the area of Tracking & Adjustment, the Group Home's intervention strategies, supports and services provided to the focus children continue to be documented in the Needs and Service Plans (NSPs) and daily notes per shift (three per day) and are modified when needed. The DCFS CSWs continue to report that the Group Home staff maintains regular contact with them in regards to the progress and adjustment made to the focus children's treatment plan.

NEXT STEPS TO SUSTAIN SUCCESS AND OVERCOME CURRENT CHALLENGES

In March 2016, OHCMD provided the Group Home with technical support related to CAD's 2015-2016 Contract Compliance Review findings in the areas of Licensure/Contract Requirement, Maintenance of Required Documentation and Service Delivery, Health and Medical Needs and Personal Needs/Survival and Economic Well-Being. Technical support was provided on how the Group Home can ensure that Group Home vehicles are always in good repair; obtain and document efforts to acquire DCFS CSW's authorization signature to implement NSPs; placed children to participate in the development of the NSP; follow-up medical examinations are conducted timely; and for placed children to have access to personal care items.

In March 2016, the Quality Assurance Reviewer met with the Group Home to discuss the results of the QAR. The Group Home met the minimum acceptable score or above in all 9 areas; therefore, no QIP was required. The OHCMD Quality Assurance staff will continue to provide ongoing technical support, training and consultation, as needed.